desert, I could not easily give an account based upon certain information. The rest I shall dispatch in the fewest possible words.

In their division of the earth's surface geographers commonly regard Africa as a third part, a few recognize only Asia and Europe, including Africa in the latter.[1] Africa is bounded on the west by the strait between our sea and the Ocean, on the east by a broad sloping tract which the natives call Catabathmos.[2] The sea is rough and without harbours, the soil fertile in grain, and favourable to flocks and herds but unproductive of trees; heaven and earth are niggardly of water.[3] The natives are healthy, swift of foot, and of great endurance. They commonly die of old age, unless they fall victims to the steel or to wild beasts; for disease seldom gets the better of any of them. Moreover the country abounds in dangerous wild animals.

What men inhabited Africa originally, and who came later, or how the races mingled, I shall tell as briefly as possible. Although my account varies from the prevailing tradition, I give it as it was translated to me from the Punic books said to have been written by king Hiempsal,[4] and in accordance with what the dwellers in that land believe. But the responsibility for its truth will rest with my authorities.

XVIII. In the beginning Africa was inhabited by the Gaetulians and Libyans, rude and uncivilized folk, who fed like beasts on the flesh of wild

[2] "The Descent"; it lay between the Cyrenaica and Egypt, and was regarded by Sallust and others as a part of Asia.

[3] That is, there is little rainfall and few lakes and streams.

[4] Not the brother of Adherbal, but a second king of the same name, father of Pompey's ally Juba.



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animals and the fruits of the earth. They were governed neither by institutions[1] nor law, nor were they subject to anyone's rule. A restless, roving people, they had their abodes wherever night compelled a halt.

But when Hercules died in Spain, as the Africans believe, the men of divers nationalities who formed his army, now that their leader was gone and since there were many on every hand who aspired to succeed him, soon dispersed. Of those who made up the army, the Medes, Persians and Armenians crossed by ships into Africa and settled in the regions nearest to our sea, the Persians closer to the Ocean;[2] and these used as huts the inverted hulls of their ships; for there was no timber in the land, and there was no opportunity to obtain it from the Spaniards by purchase or barter, since the wide expanse of sea and ignorance of the language were a bar to intercourse. The Persians intermarried with the Gaetulians and were gradually merged with them, and because they often moved from place to place trying the soil, they called themselves Nomads.[3] It is an interesting fact, that even to the present day the dwellings of the rustic Numidians, which they call *mapalia*, are oblong and have roofs with curved sides, like the hulls of ships.

But the Medes and the Armenians had the Libyans as their nearest neighbours; for that people lived closer to the Afric sea,[4] while the Gaetulians were farther to the south, not far from the regions of heat. These three peoples[5] soon had towns; for being separated from the Spaniards only by the strait,

[4] The western part of the Mediterranean.
[5] The Medes, Armenians and Libyans.



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they began to exchange wares with them. The Libyans gradually altered the name of the Medes, calling them in their barbarian tongue *Mauri* (Moors).[1]

Now the commonwealth of the Persians[2] soon increased and finally the younger generation, under the name of Numidians, separated from their parents because of the excess of population and took possession of the region next to Carthage, which is called Numidia. Then both peoples,[3] relying upon each other's aid, brought their neighbours under their sway by arms or by fear and acquired renown and glory, especially those who had come near to our sea, because the Libyians are less warlike than the Gaetulians. Finally, the greater part of northern Africa fell into the hands of the Numidians, and all the vanquished were merged in the race and name of their rulers.

XIX. Later the Phoenicians, sometimes for the sake of ridding themselves of the superfluous population at home, sometimes from desire for dominion tempting away the commons and others who were desirous of a change, founded Hippo,[4] Hadrumetum, Leptis,[5] and other cities on the coast. These soon became very powerful and were in some cases a defence and in others a glory to the mother city. As to Carthage, I think it better to be silent rather than say too little, since time warns me to hasten on to other topics.

[2] The older Numidians (Persians) and Gaetulians near the Ocean and those who had settled near Carthage.

[4] Probably Hippo Diarrhytus, near Utica, rather than Hippo Regius, which was farther to the west.

[5] There are also two towns of this name; probably Leptis Minor is meant.



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